

Group I, claims 1-6, as made by Todd T. Taylor on May 24, 2001. Concurrently, claims 7-18 have been canceled.

Responsive to the objection to the drawings with respect to Figure 1, Applicant has submitted herewith a Request for Approval of Drawing Changes, keeping in mind the comments offered by the Examiner. Thus, Applicant submits that the drawings are now in allowable form.

Responsive to the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,218,612 (McKitrick, et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,201,687 (Murray) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,218,167 (Gasque), Applicant hereby respectfully traverses this rejection and submits that claims 1-6 are now in condition for allowance.

McKitrick, et al. disclose a modular panel partition system which includes a plurality of partition panels 20 (Fig. 1) that are interconnected with a plurality of panel connectors, including connecting posts 22 (column 3, lines 50-53). Connecting post 22 extends through the wire-way that is defined in lower portion 34 of partition panel 20, and is, therefore, provided with a conduit or wire-way passage 38 (Figs. 2-5). For further user convenience, connecting post 22 may be formed with a passage 50 that extends along the length thereof and is adapted to have conduits (shown but not labeled) extend therethrough (column 4, lines 32-39).

Murray discloses a modular furniture wall system 10 (Figs. 1 and 2) useful in providing active telecommunications equipment and wire management which includes a furniture frame 12 (column 4, lines 62-66). Wiring 60 is routed from active switch 18 and outward from frame 12 as desired (column 6, lines 2-4). As seen from Fig. 2, Murray further discloses the placement of a plurality of wraps (not labeled) spaced along, and each surrounding, a plurality of insulated wires.

Gasque, Jr., discloses a cable assembly 90 (Figs. 3a and 3b) which is used underground between antenna 10 and building 20. Cable assembly 90 is formed as follows: cable 40 is

helically-wound to form cable 92 with an approximately round cross-section and is surrounded by a vapor barrier 94 and a conductive shield 96. A grounding wire 98, outside conductive shield 96, extends along the length of shield 96 and is in continuous electrical contact therewith. Grounding wire 98 and shield 96 are enclosed by an insulating weatherproof jacket 100. Fig. 3b shows a perspective, cut-away view of cable assembly 90 (column 3, lines 49-63). Jacket 100 is formed of some flexible, substantially weatherproof material such as neoprene, polyvinylchloride, polypropylene or the like (column 4, lines 3-6).

In contrast, claim 1 recites in part:

a hollow elongated conductive enclosure; . . . and

a flexible electrical conductor having an exposed electrically conductive surface within the enclosure making electrical contact with the enclosure interior in a plurality of randomly distributed regions along the length of the enclosure.

(Emphasis added.) Applicant submits that such an invention is neither taught, disclosed nor suggested by any of the cited references, alone or in combination, and includes distinct advantages thereover.

McKitrick et al. disclose a wire-way provided with a wire-way passage 38 therein which has a multi-wire conduit (not labeled) fed therethrough. McKitrick et al. do not disclose or suggest the sheathing of that conduit to be conductive in nature, nor do McKitrick et al. disclose or suggest the presence of a flexible electrical conductor within that conduit that has an exposed electrically conductive surface. Therefore, McKitrick et al. fail to teach or suggest a hollow elongated conductive enclosure and a flexible electrical conductor having an exposed electrically conductive surface within the enclosure making electrical contact with the enclosure interior in a plurality of randomly distributed regions along the length of the enclosure, as set forth by claim 1.

Murray discloses wiring 60 that is routed from active switch 18 and outward from frame 12 as desired (column 6, lines 2-4) and further discloses the placement of a plurality of wraps (not labeled) spaced along, and each surrounding, a plurality of insulated wires as part of wiring 60. However, Murray does not disclose or suggest those wires to be carried in a hollow elongated conductive enclosure, nor does Murray disclose or suggest the presence of a flexible electrical conductor within wiring 60 that has an exposed electrically conductive surface. Thus, Murray fails to teach or suggest a hollow elongated conductive enclosure and a flexible electrical conductor having an exposed electrically conductive surface within the enclosure making electrical contact with the enclosure interior in a plurality of randomly distributed regions along the length of the enclosure, as set forth by claim 1.

Gasque, Jr., discloses grounding wire 98 to be positioned outside of conductive shield 96 and to be in continuous electrical contact therewith. Furthermore, jacket 100 of Gasque, Jr., which does enclose grounding wire 98 and shield 96, is made of an insulating material such as neoprene, polyvinylchloride, polypropylene or the like. As such, Gasque, Jr., does not disclose or suggest positioning grounding wire 98 inside an elongated conductive enclosure or positioning it in a manner so as to contact an electrically conductive enclosure at randomly distributed regions. Consequently, Gasque, Jr., fails to teach or suggest a hollow elongated conductive enclosure and a flexible electrical conductor having an exposed electrically conductive surface within the enclosure making electrical contact with the enclosure interior in a plurality of randomly distributed regions along the length of the enclosure, as set forth by claim 1.

The present invention as set forth by claim 1 includes distinct advantages over the cited references. One advantage of the present invention is that it requires no special connection or assembly step to ground the enclosure. Another correlated advantage is that sufficient grounding

is achieved simply by locating a flexible, non-insulated conductor within the hollow elongated conductive enclosure, needing to rely solely upon random contact of the flexible conductor with the conductive enclosure to gain adequate grounding.

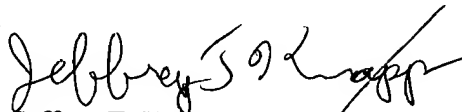
For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that claim 1, and claims 2-6 depending therefrom, are now in condition for allowance, the allowance of which is hereby respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that no combination of the cited references teaches, discloses or suggests the subject matter of the amended claims. The pending claims are therefore in condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of the claims.

In the event Applicant has overlooked the need for an extension of time, an additional extension of time, payment of fee, or additional payment of fee, Applicant hereby conditionally petitions therefor and authorizes that any charges be made to Deposit Account No. 20-0095, TAYLOR & AUST, P.C.

Should any question concerning any of the foregoing arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (219) 897-3400.

Respectfully submitted,


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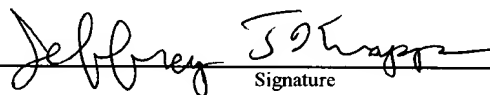
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Box Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231, on: October 17, 2001.

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Name of Registered Representative


Signature

October 17, 2001

Date